

Message Text

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PAGE 01 NEW DE 06028 181201Z
ACTION NEA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 988
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UNCLAS NEW DELHI 6028

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: SREF IN
SUBJECT: REFUGEE EXODUS FROM DANDAKARANYA
RESETTLEMENT PROJECT

FOLLOWING SENT ACTION NEW DELHI INFO CALCUTTA MADRAS
FROM BOMBAY APR 13 IS REPEATED

QUOTE
UNCLAS BOMBAY 0925

E. O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: SREF, IN
SUBJ: REFUGEE EXODUS FROM DANDAKARANYA RESETTLEMENT PROJECT

REF : (A) CALCUTTA 535 (B) CALCUTTA 0610

1. THE MADHYA PRADESH SECTOR OF THE DANDAKARANYA RESETTLEMENT PROJECT (DRP), COMMONLY KNOWN AS PARALKOT AND KONDAGAON ZONES IN THE BASTAR REGION, IS ALSO AFFECTED BY THE BENGAL HINDU REFUGEE EXODUS. AS AN ADDENDUM AND AMPLIFICATION OF REFTELS OUR FINDINGS, BASED ON LOCAL VERNACULAR AND ENGLISH PRESS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

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2. ACCORDING TO THE APRIL 6 STATEMENT MADE BY THE GOVERNMENT OF MADHYA PRADESH (GOMP) REHABILITATION MINISTER ON THE FLOOR OF THE LEGISLATURE SOME 19,000 PERSONS OR 2,000 FAMILIES HAVE LEFT PARALKOT AND KONDAGAON. ABOUT ONE-THIRD OF THE RESETTLED FAMILIES HAVE LEFT. WHILE A GOOD NUMBER HAVE ALREADY REACHED WEST BENGAL, -AT LEAST 4,000 PERSONS ARE BELIEVED TO BE STRANDED AT RAIPUR AND DURG RAILROAD

STATIONS WHICH ARE THE CLOSEST RAILHEADS FROM DRP. GOMP, WHICH APPARENTLY MADE NO ATTEMPTS TO STOP THEM FROM MIGRATING, HAS ALLOCATED RS.100,000 TO PROVIDE FOOD FOR THE STRANDED REFUGEES. CHIEF MINISTER SAKLECHA REPORTEDLY STATED THAT HE HAD RECENTLY DISCUSSED THE SUBJECT WITH EW WEST BENGAL REHABILITATION MINISTER AT DABPAL AND ALSO HAD MET WITH PRIME MINISTER DESAI AND UNION REHABILITATION MINISTER AT NEW DELHI.

3. ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS THE REFUGEE EXODUS FROM THE MADHYA PRADESH SECTOR OF DRP WAS NOT AS GRAVE AS IN THE ORISSA SECTOR UNTIL ABOUT 6 WEEKS AGO AND ONLY 40 FAMILIES HAD LEFT. HOWEVER, BETWEEN MARCH 2 AND MARCH 15, SOME 400 FAMILIES FLED FROM THEIR SETTLEMENT VILLAGES LEAVING HOME AND BELONGINGS; IN THE LAST TWO WEEKS OF MARCH THIS WAS SWELLED BY THE DEPARTURE OF 1500 MORE FAMILIES.

4. THE CAUSE FOR MASS MIGRATION REMAINS UNIDENTIFIED. ACCORDING TO ONE REPORT, THE SITUATION AT PARALKOT AND KONDAGAON REGIONS WAS QUITE STABLE UNTIL THE END OF 1977; RELATIONS BETWEEN LOCAL TRIBALS AND THE REFUGEES WAS TOLERABLE, IF NOT GOOD; LAND ALLOTTED TO REFUGEES (APPROXIMATELY 95,000 ACRES) WAS UNDER DEVELOPMENT. ALTHOUGH ADMINISTRATIVE INDIFFERENCE TOWARDS DRP SETTLERS WAS OCCASIONALLY REPORTED IN PRESS, THERE WAS NO UNCLASSIFIED

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INDICATION OF WHOLESALERESENTMENT AMONG THE REFUGEES.

5. IT HAS BEEN SPECULATED THAT MAY TRANSMIGRATION OF ORISSA REFUGEES WHO PASSED THROUGH MADHYA PRADESH DRP AREA CAUSED A FEAR PSYCHOSIS AMONG THE SETTLERS AND THEY TOO JOINED ORIYAN REFUGEES OUT OF FEAR. (GIVEN THE IMMENSE RECENT MOVEMENT, THIS SEEMS LOGICAL).

6. ACCORDING TO ANOTHER REPORT, THE RETURN OF CPM TO POWER IN WEST BENGAL RAISED A HOPE AMONG MADHYA PRADESH DRP SETTLERS THAT THE NEW GOVERNMENT WOULD BE SYMPATHETIC TOWARDS SETTLING THEM IN WEST BENGAL SINCE SEVERAL OF THE CPM LEADERS, WHEN IN OPPOSITION HAD PUBLICLY OPPOSED THEIR SETTLEMENT FIRST IN ANDAMAN ISLANDS AND THEN IN DRP, AND HAD ESPOUSED REHABILITATING THEM IN WEST BENGAL. THE REPORT IDENTIFIES AN ORGANIZATION CALLED UDASTU UNNAYANSHEEL SAMITI (REFUGEE REHABILITATION COMMITTEE) TO BE ACTIVELY ENCOURAGING REFUGEES TO DESERT DRP. WE HAVE NO INFORMATION ON ITS BACKGROUND OR REGARDING ITS SPONSORS. COURTNEY

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